Synopsis

on

Effect of High Performance Work System on Employee Well-Being and Performance in Service Sector

For Registration

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Under the Supervision of:

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I. Topic of Research

Effect of High Performance Work System on Employee Well-Being and Performance in Service Sector

II. Introduction

In a fast-changing economy, work can be very demanding and stressful which directly or indirectly affects well-being of employees. The concept of employee well-being is not new; researches have proved that for an organization to remain competitive, it is important to take good care of its employees. For organizations, in the era of globalization, emerging new technologies, and changing workplace environment, sustaining the well-being of employees is a challenging task. A body of researchers shows that the HRM system of any organization is a very important factor that influences well-being (Kroon, Voorde, & Veldhoven 2009; Van de Voorde *et al.*, 2012; Guest, 2017; Miao & Cao, 2019). The concept of well-being is multidimensional in nature encompassing three dimensions namely psychological, physical, and social well-being. Employee well-being should be seen as an outcome itself and not a mean to outcomes, as according to the study of Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) 2015, the prevalence of emotional problems such as anxiety and depression has risen by 45-50 percent among corporate workers over the last eight years and in 2018 paper titled as 'Corporate Wellness Programme: Benefits to Organisation & Economy,' by ASSOCHAM highlighted that employers earn Rs. 132.33 as saving on expenses related to absenteeism and Rs.6.62 back as reduction in health care expenses on an average for every single rupee being spent on employee programmes related to wellness but ironically 42% of the organizations ignore employee health. These two reports by

ASSOCHAM highlighted that employee well-being is still an underrated issue in India. The present study will focus on how high performance work system affects well-being and performance of employees. It is pertinent to mention here that in past studies high involvement management, high commitment management has been used to represent the bundle of HR practices but generally, high performance work system (HPWS) is being used and same has been used in this study also. HPWS is a bundle of independent but related HR practices that work together to improve both employee and organizational level results (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020). HPWS is an organizational level phenomenon whereas employee well-being is an individual level phenomenon (R.Miao *et al.,* 2020) and in literature, most of the studies are based on the same level design. In this study, HPWS is defined on the basis of the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) framework (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000).

On basis of past studies, the relationship between high performance work system, well-being and performance of employees is based primarily on two views (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012): 1. The Optimistic view says HR Practices positively affect employers and employees both in terms of performance and well-being (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000). 2. The Critical view says HR Practices are positively related to employers in term of performance but negatively to employee well-being (Ramsay *et al.,* 2000). These contradictory outcomes could be because of the multidimensional nature of well-being leading to the trade-off effects of HR practices (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012; M. Guerci *et al.,* 2019). Here trade-off effect means HPWS may improve one dimension of well-being while it may decrease other dimensions. High performance work system (HPWS) has significant impact on well-being and performance of employees but the extant literature on this relationship is more inclined towards the mutual gain perspective. The present study will focus on both the perspectives including different dimensions of well-being of employees to draw conclusion on possible trade-off effects between the relationship of HR practices and employee well-being following the study by Marco Guerci and colleagues (2019).

III. Review of Literature and Theoretical Framework

The review of related literature consists of detailed conceptualization of all the variables and related theory that helps in explaining the relationship between high performance work system (HPWS) and the well-being of employees and performance. Based on the literature review, research gap is found out and relevant objectives and hypotheses are developed.

High Performance Work System (HPWS)

The uprise of HPWS was the result of new emerging market demand and in today's world when things can be imitated, human resource is the only source that helps an organization to sustain and survive by providing the required skill, speed, and flexibility, therefore HPWS is seen as an investment in term of competitive advantage rather than a cost (Becker *et al.*, 1998). With the rise of Japanese 'lean production' system, US firms discovered that their HR system didn't really fit the competitive context (Dayarathna, 2012) therefore US firms adopted the concept of HPWS in 1970s to gain competitive advantage. HPWS is a bundle of independent but related practices for human resources that work together to improve employee attitude and organizational outcomes (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000; R. Miao *et al*., 2020). There is no definite list of HR practices that are included in high performance work system. It includes practices that enhance employee knowledge, skills, abilities, and engagement that allows them to successfully accomplish their jobs (Guthrie 2001; Clarke and Hill 2012). In the HPWS area the Ability-Motivation- Opportunity (AMO) framework is an established framework (Shantz *et al.,* 2016; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020). In the AMO model, the first dimension Ability includes practices that enhance the skills and ability to perform, it generally includes staffing practices, training, and development practices (R. Miao *et al.,* 2020), the skills and knowledge possess through these practices enhance employees psychologically capital i.e. Resilience (R. Miao *et al.,* 2020), the second dimension includes practices that enhance employees motivation such as result-oriented performance appraisal, workplace support, finally the opportunity dimension involves HR practices such as autonomy, open communication, and participation in decision making (Appelbaum *et al.,* 2000; Ogbonnaya and Messersmith 2019; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020). This study will include HPWS based on ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) model.

Employee Well-Being

According to Rucker 2016, Bernardini Ramazzini (1633-1714) is considered to be one of the first few to write about how work-related exposure impact worker's health and the likelihood of preventive actions (Gainer, 2008) to improve the well-being of employees. A lot of work has been done after that but yet there is no single definition that explains employee well-being in a holistic manner, different academicians and institutes have put forward different meanings based on their study. Some of the definitions of employee well-being are:

The definition of Health according to the WHO (1948) is, "A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease".

According to International Labour Organizations, "Workplace well-being relates to all aspects of working life, from the quality and safety of the physical environment, to how workers feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work, and work organization."

According to Warr (1987), it is the overall quality of employee experience and functioning at work (Van de Voorde *et al.*, 2012).

Well-Being is a broader concept including the various aspect of a person life (satisfaction, positive and negative emotional state, pleasure, purpose, stress, depression, positive relationship) but are generally referred to physical, psychological, and social aspects of well-being (Grant *et al.*, 2007), the inclusion of these dimensions makes the study more holistic and comparable. It is important to differentiate as a possible trade-off between these three aspects of employee well-being at work might exist (Grant *et al.*, 2007; Van de Voorde *et al.*, 2012).

The first measure of well-being is **Health**: In the organizational context, the link between work and employee health is studied in terms of stressor and strain. Stressor refers to situations that give rise to stress such as workload and work intensification, whereas strain such as burnout and stress is the outcome of stressors (Karasek 1979; Van de Voorde *et al.*, 2012). Heavy workload, work intensification, and stress are common issues related to the work environment (Krishantha, 2018).

The second measure is **Psychological well-being** mainly based on two approaches (Guest, 2017): 1. Well-Being is described as individual subjective feeling in terms of happiness and satisfaction according to Hedonic Approach. It is more concerned with the subjective experience of pleasure in terms of positive and negative affect. 2. Well-Being is described as the fulfillment of one's full potential (self-actualization) according to Eudemonic Approach (Ryan & Deci, 2001). According to Robertson and Flint-Taylor (2008) "Psychological well being at work as the mental state with emotional and meaningfulness dimension that individuals experience while they are at work settings" (Joy & Sinosh, 2016). This study includes both the perspective in the concept of psychological well-being.

The third measure is **Social well-being**: It is defined as the perceived quality of employee relations with others such as their colleagues and supervisor. This dimension is somewhat distinct from the other two as it focuses on interactions and quality of the relationship between employee and colleagues and also between employees and their manager while the other two focuses on the individual aspect (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012). Social well-being has been studied in terms of co-operation between employees, organizational support, trust, and social support, leader-member exchange within the organization (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012; Guest, 2017).

HPWS and Employee Well-Being

HR practices like training and development, information sharing, job security, employee voice, autonomy, and supportive relationships with the immediate manager are presented as practices which focus on well-being of employees (Guest, 2017; Cooper *et al.,* 2019; Salas-Vallina *et al.,* 2020). In this regard two opposing opinions have been suggested (Peccei *et al.,* 2013), where the first view states that HR practices have positive relationship with the well-being of employees and the organizational outcome, known as mutual gain perspective (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012; Veld & Alfas 2017; M.Guerci *et al.,* 2019), on the contrary, the conflicting view presents contradictory outcome saying that HR practices has positive relationship with organizational outcome, but at the cost of the well-being of employees as it relates to the intensification of work and employee exploitation (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012; Peccei *et al.,* 2013). In past studies, conflicting outcome was supported by the study of Kroon, Voorde and colleagues (2009) showing that presence of HPWS leads to higher job demand which in turn leads to emotional exhaustion (burnout). Past studies have shown show that high performance work system is significantly related to the hedonic well-being in terms of job satisfaction (Baptist, 2007; Ho & Kuvaas, 2020; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020; Zhang *et al.,* 2020) and with social well-being (Guest, 2017; Salas-Vanila *et al.,* 2020). HRM practices are positively related with employee well-being and lower level of anxiety (Ho & Kuvaas, 2020). Whereas some studies shows negative impact of HPWS on employees health in term of work intensification, anxiety, and burnout (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016; Athwaria & Srivastava, 2018). The study of (M. Guerci *et al.,* 2019) also shows the trade-off effect between set of HR practices and various aspects of employee well-being. In studying the relationship between set of HR practices and well-being of employees past studies are more inclined towards mutual gain perspective that supports positive relationship of HR practices on both well-being of

employees and their performance, paying less intention to the conflicting perspective (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019), this study will focus on both the perspectives.

Organizational Justice

Past researches differentiated between three types of justice viz, Distributive justice is related with the fairness in terms of the distribution of outcomes, and Procedural justice is related with the perceived fairness of the process and the Interactional justice pertains to interpersonal treatment received based on a meta-analysis study by Colquitt and colleagues (2001). Consistent with the previous study we will focus on organizational justice a mediator between the relationship of HPWS and employee well-being (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016; Zhang *et al.,* 2020). It can also advance knowledge in explaining why organizational level HPWS affects employee attitude in terms of well-being particularly (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016).

Various contextual, environmental factors and other factors such as individual psychological capital, leader's support and their behavior, and organization justice climate affect employee well-being (Zheng *et al.,* 2015; Heffernan & Dundon, 2016; Miao & Cao, 2019; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020). Without the mediating and moderating variable the complex relationship of high performance work system and well-being of employees cannot be captured (M. Zhang *et al.,* 2013). Now studies are being carried out not just on the direct linkage but the relation is also being tested with some mediation and moderation effect and the studies supports the mutual gain approach (Rentao Miao & Cao 2019, Athwaria & Srivastava 2018, and Heffernan & Dundon 2016, but still, the studies explaining the underlying mechanism behind this relationship is not yet exhaustive (R. Miao *et al.,* 2020).

Employee Performance

Employee performance plays an important role as it directly impacts an organization's overall performance (Boxall & Macky, 2009). Performance is the primary motivation for any organization while implementing any practice. Employee performance is measured in terms of objective and subjective performance (F. Edgar *et al.,* 2015). Through the review, it was found out that employee performance has been measured mainly as subjective assessment (self-reported, or by managers or by the colleague). Based on past studies it is observed that performance has been measured in terms of commitment, service quality, productivity, involvement, and job performance. Use of HR practices, based on the AMO framework is positively associated with employee performance (Huang *et al.,* 2016; Guest, 2017; Khoreva *et al.,* 2018; Sivapragasam *et al.,* 2018). Well-being of

the employees is critical to the performance and survival of the organization which could be predicted on the performance of its human resource (Baptiste, 2007). Poor well-being of employees has potential adverse impact on organizational productivity (Kowalski & loretto, 2017). Some of the factors that influence individual subjective performance are individual emotional state, perceived organizational support and interpersonal relationship with colleagues and supervisor (Nielsen *et al.,* 2017). Many studies have proved a strong association between HR practices and employee performance when measured as a subjective assessment and also that well-being mediates this relationship, such as employee psychological well-being has direct impact on employee job performance (Kundi *et al.,* 2020). Employee job satisfaction (subjective well-being) is significantly related with workplace efficiency and financial performance, and the quality of service output (Bryson *et al.,* 2017). To see how HR practices affect performance inclusion of bundle of HR practices is important as a meta-analysis of Chinese firms suggests HPWS as a whole has significant positive influence on non-financial performance rather than one single HR practice (Zhang *et al.,* 2012).

Theoretical Framework

On basis of the literature review the theoretical framework explains the core theory that is used to explain the relationship between high performance work system and well-being of employees.

Conservation of Resources Theory

The relation between Ability, Motivation, Opportunity (A-M-O) based on HPWS and different dimensions of employee well-being are hypothesized based on conservation of resource (COR) theory by Hobfoll (1989). COR theory by Hobfoll 1989 is based on the conviction that people endeavor to get, hold, foster, and secure resources and the need to get and conserve resources for survival, is vital to human conduct (Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). According to Hobfoll, there are four fundamental sorts of resources: objects (e.g. tools for work), conditions (e.g. employment, tenure), personal characteristics (e.g. key skills and traits), and energies (e.g. knowledge, money). According to Hobfoll and colleagues (2018) resources are difficult to attain and to keep, so resource loss is considered to be more noticeable and of prominent effect than resource gain. It is important for humans to acquire and reserve resources for survival and social bonding and also resources help in meeting the stressful situations (Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). Among all the most valued and common resources are family, health, well-being, a sense of purpose and meaning in life and

also self esteem (Hobfoll *et al.,* 2018). In organizational context high performance work system act as resources to employees to fulfill their job requirements and when employees fails to get these resources it results into reduction of their well-being. The resources can be personal such as individual psychological capital or can be provided by the organization for example HR practices, work environment, supervisor and colleagues support (Nielsen *et al.,* 2017). Past studies have used COR theory to explain the relationship between HR practices, well-being of employees and their performance (Kowalski & loretto, 2017; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020).

Research Gap

Employee well-being is the key mechanism through which HR practices enhance organizational performance. The existing literature focuses on how high performance work system impacts well-being and performance of employees but mainly from the mutual gain perspective ignoring the conflicting outcomes (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). There is very limited literature available on conflicting perspective and also studies are more inclined to a particular type of well-being (happiness), paying less attention to the health related well-being such as burnout, job stress (Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019). More studies that consider all three dimension of well-being and performance on the basis of AMO based components of HR practices are required (M. Guerci *et al.,* 2019). To fully understand how HPWS impact employee well-being and performance more studies with mediation and moderation analysis are required. Moreover developing countries like Srilanka and other Asian countries lag behind developed countries and have paid less attention to the concept of employee well-being (Krishantha, 2018), as only few studies are available in Indian context therefore more extensive studies are required.

IV. Rationale of the Study

In human resource management literature researchers focused mainly on how HR practices that improves organizational performance impacts employee well-being (see review by Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019; Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012) and also suggested that there is little empirical research that links high performance work system, different aspects of employee well-being and performance. One important thing is that the studies on employee well-being took place before the outburst of COVID-19 pandemic however this pandemic has resulted into some direct and indirect changes in organizational and employees working style i.e. work from home and also according to People Matters, employee well-being (2020) survey by 7th fold (a boutique HR and well-being

firm) highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on mental and physical well-being of employees in India. So keeping the current scenario in mind and research gap in past studies we are interested in checking the relationship between these variables and with the primary focus directed towards well-being as an outcome itself and to understand the black-box in HRM literature, the study will also include mediating variables.

Variables

Independent Variable

The independent variable in our study is HPWS which is expected to account for the changes in the dependent variable that is employee well-being and performance.

High Performance Work System

It represents a bundle of HR practices that work together in synergy to improve outcomes at employee and organizational level (Appelbaum et al. 2000; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020). This study will make use of the term high performance work system to represent the bundle of HR practices. There is no agreed set of HR practices that pertains to HPWS different scholars have used different set of practices. Based on past studies some of the HR practices that constitute HPWS are selective recruitment, training and development, performance appraisal based on the result, employee participation and information sharing, autonomy, and job security (Clarke and Hill 2012; Heffernan & Dundon, 2016; Veld & Alfes 2017; Athwaria & Srivastava 2018; R. Miao et al. 2020).

Dependent Variables

In this study employee well-being and performance are taken up as the dependent variables which are expected to change because of the independent variable.

(1) Employee well-being

The well-being of employees is today seen as the primary outcome not just by human resource experts but also by decision-makers (M. Guerci *et al.,* 2019). According to CIPD (2007) "workplace well-being means creating an environment to promote a state of contentment that allows an employee to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organization". This study includes three dimensions of well-being suggested by Grant and colleagues in 2007 and also study highlighted that these dimensions are the core of employee well-being (Van de Voorde *et al.,* 2012).

(a) Health well-being: This dimension of well-being is generally explored in term of subjective feelings of an individual such as sense of energy (positive indicator) and as work intensification, exhaustion, and stress (negative indicator) (Guest, 2017).

(b) Psychological well-being: Employee psychological well-being also known as the happiness dimension of well-being is explained through hedonic and eudemonic well-being. A distinction between these two aspects is generally made while considering the psychological dimension of well-being (Guest, 2017).

(I) **Hedonic well-being:** It is defined as the subjective feeling of an individual and it is mainly measured in terms of job satisfaction, positive and negative affects related to the job (M. Guerci *et al.*, 2019).

(II) **Eudemonic well-being:** Ryan and Deci (2001) defined it as the actualization of human potential. It has been measured in term of work engagement in the work domain (Grant et al. 2007; M. Guerci et al, 2019) which is defined as "Positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption" (Schaufeli & Bakker 2004, p.295).

This study will include both the perspectives in the concept of employee psychological well-being.

(c) Social well-being: The third dimension is also called as relational well-being. This dimension is somewhat distinct from the other two as it focuses on interactions and quality of the relationship between employee and colleagues and between employee and their manager while the other two focuses on the individual aspect (Van de Voorde *et al.*, 2012). It is reflected through interpersonal relations, perceived trust, level of social support, and fairness of treatment (Guest, 2017).

(2) Employee Performance

The performance of any workplace is impacted by the performance of the team and before that by the individual performance which in turn is the result of interactions between employee ability to perform, their effort, and performance opportunities (Boxall & Macky, 2009). This study will check how high performance work system affect employee job performance directly and through employee well-being.

Mediating Variable

The mediating variable accounts for the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. It explains how or why a relationship between variables occurs.

(1) Organizational Justice

In present study, we focused on the organizational justice climate as a mediator between the relation of HPWS and well-being of employees. To understand the 'black box' how and why HR practices affect employee outcome (well-being), we will be studying organizational justice as potential mediators.

V. Objectives and Hypothesis of the Study

The main objective is to study the effect of high performance work system on well-being of employees. Pertinent to the above main purpose, the study intends to meet the following sub objectives.

1. To assess the effect of high performance work system on employee well-being.
2. To examine the effect of high performance work system on employee performance.
3. To assess the effect of employee well-being on employee performance.
4. To check whether organizational justice acts as a mediator between high performance work system and employee well-being.

Hypothesis

To ensure a sustainable workforce, organizations need to pay attention to the well-being of employees as it has personal and organizational implications (Kowalski & Loretto, 2017). Past studies have shown that use of HR practices has positive association with employee performance (Huang *et al.,* 2016; Guest, 2017; Khoreva *et al.,* 2018; Sivapragasam *et al.,* 2018) and also with employee well-being (Baptist, 2007; Guest 2017; Ho & Kuvaas, 2020; R. Miao *et al.,* 2020; Zhang *et al.,* 2020).Thus the following hypothesis are framed as:

$H_{01:}$ High performance work system is positively related with employee well-being.

$H_{02:}$ High performance work system is positively related with employee performance.

Past studies have shown that employee well-being have positive relationship with the performance of employees (Salas-Vanilla *et al.,* 2020; Peccei & Van de Voorde, 2019; Guest, 2017). On the basis of past studies following hypothesis is framed as:

$H_{03:}$ Employee well-being is positively related with employee performance.

Past studies have shown that organizational justice mediates the relationship between high

performance work system and employee well-being (Heffernan & Dundon, 2016). A Meta analysis study by Karina Nielsen and colleagues (2017) has shown that interventions aimed at building resources at any four levels (Individual, group, leader and organizational level) improve employee well-being and performance. Thus the following hypotheses are framed as: $H_{04:}$ The relationship between high performance work system and employee well-being will be mediated by organizational justice.

VI. Research Methodology

The research methodology is developed to empirically examine the objectives of the study. It includes the systematic procedure for collecting and analyzing the data.

a. Research Design

The design of research would be exploratory cum descriptive describing how high performance work system impact different aspects of employee well-being and their performance.

b. Type of Data

Both primary data and secondary data would be collected in order to achieve the objectives mentioned in the study. The primary data will be collected from employees working in different organizations operating in service sector across India by using a standardized questionnaire.

c. Sampling Plan

1) **Sampling Unit:** Sample would comprise of various employees working in service sector in India.
2) **Sampling Size:** The sampling plan would consist of the employees working in the service sector and the sample size would consist of around 600 respondents.
3) **Sampling Area:** The sample would be drawn from the different organizations operating in service sector across India.
4) **Sampling Technique:** Probability sampling technique would be used to collect the data.

d. Research Instrument

A standardized questionnaire would be used in order to collect the data from the respondents.
The questionnaire would comprise of two sections described as under:
Section A would include the demographics of the employees, such as gender, age, educational qualification, employee experience etc.
Section B would include items related to the variables taken up in the study. These are high performance work system, employee well-being and performance. The statements of the questionnaire would be adapted from different previous research studies. The responses on the items would be measured using a Likert scale.

e. Research Tools

Descriptive statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation would be used. Correlation and regression would be used to demonstrate the direction and degree of relationship between the variables. Moreover, other advanced tools such as SEM if required as per the requirements of the objectives would also be used.

VII. Tentative Chapter Scheme

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter would provide an overview of the variables taken up in the study. Moreover, a light would be thrown on how high performance work system impact employee well-being and performance in service sector across India.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter would include the review of the existing literature related to the variables taken up in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The third chapter would highlight the importance of conducting the study. The objectives of the study would be mentioned in this chapter. It would describe the detailed research methodology including the sampling design, research instruments, tools, construction of the questionnaire, data collection method, and statistical tests used to analyse the data.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Interpretation

The fourth chapter would include the analysis of data and interpretation of results.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

The final chapter would include the findings of the study. It would also include discussions based on the findings and results. It would also provide recommendations to the organizations, managers to improve well-being and performance of employees. Further, it would be including the limitations of the present study and future research directions.

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Signature of Supervisor **Signature of Scholar**

Signature of Director

(With Official Seal)